



**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Issued by the Department of Transportation  
on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2003

Essential Air Service at

**THIEF RIVER FALLS, MINNESOTA  
WATERTOWN, SOUTH DAKOTA  
MASON CITY, IOWA  
FORT DODGE, IOWA**

under 49 U.S.C. 41731 *et seq.*

**Served: March 10, 2003**

**Docket OST-2001-10642  
Docket OST-2001-10644  
Docket OST-2001-10682  
Docket OST-2001-10684**

## ORDER EXTENDING SERVICE OBLIGATION

### Summary

By this order, the Department of Transportation extends the service obligation of Mesaba Aviation, Inc., d/b/a Mesaba Airlines (Mesaba), at Thief River Falls, Minnesota, Watertown, South Dakota, Mason City, Iowa, and Fort Dodge, Iowa, for another 30 days, through [April 4, 2003](#).

### Background

On September 17, 2001, Mesaba filed 90-day notices of its intent to suspend its subsidy-free service at Thief River Falls and Watertown effective January 1, 2002. Subsequently, on September 21, 2001, Mesaba filed 90-day notices to suspend service at Fort Dodge and Mason City, also effective January 1, 2002. By Order 2001-12-26, December 31, 2001, the Department prohibited Mesaba from suspending either service beyond the end of its 90-day notice period, through January 31, 2002, and requested proposals, with subsidy if necessary, from carriers interested in providing replacement service. As required by 49 U.S.C. 41734, we have extended Mesaba's service obligation for additional 30-day periods, the latest through [March 5, 2003](#), by Order [2003-2-1](#).

By Order 2002-7-38, July 30, 2002, the Department set short-term final subsidy rates for Mesaba's hold-in service until further Department action. In addition to Mesaba, Corporate Airlines and Great Lakes Aviation have also submitted proposals, and we are in the process of preparing a final decision. However, these cases will not be completed before the end of the current 30-day hold-in period. Thus, in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 41734(c), we will extend Mesaba's service obligation at the four communities listed above for an additional 30 days, or until replacement service actually begins, whichever occurs first.

This order is issued under authority assigned in 14 CFR 385.12(k)(5).

**ACCORDINGLY,**

1. We require Mesaba Aviation, Inc., d/b/a Mesaba Airlines, to maintain essential air service at Thief River Falls, MN, Watertown, SD, Mason City, IA and Fort Dodge, IA, as specified in ordering paragraph 3 of Order 2001-12-26, for an additional 30-day period through [April 4, 2003](#), or until a carrier capable of providing reliable replacement service actually begins service, whichever occurs first;<sup>1</sup>

2. We direct Mesaba to retain all books, records, and other source and summary documentation to support subsidy claims for payment, and to preserve and maintain such documentation in a manner that readily permits its audit and examination by representatives of the Department. Such documentation shall be retained for seven years or until the Department indicates that the records may be destroyed. Copies of flight logs for aircraft sold or disposed of must be retained. The carrier may forfeit its compensation for any claim that is not supported under the terms of this order;

3. Dockets OST-2001-10642, OST-10644, OST-10682 and OST-10684, will remain open until further order of the Department; and

4. We will serve a copy of this order on the Mayors and Airport Managers of Thief River Falls, Watertown, Mason City and Fort Dodge, the Minnesota DOT, the South Dakota DOT, the Iowa DOT, and Mesaba Aviation, Inc.

Persons entitled to petition the Department for review of this order under the Department's Regulations, 14 CFR 385.50, must file such petitions within ten (10) days after the date of service of this order.

This order will be effective immediately, and the filing of a petition for review shall not preclude its effectiveness.

By:

**RANDALL D. BENNETT**  
Director  
Office of Aviation Analysis

(SEAL)

*An electronic version of this document is available on the World Wide Web at  
<http://dms.dot.gov>*

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 41734(c), we will extend Mesaba's service obligation for successive 30-day periods as necessary until replacement service actually begins.